

18 October 1984

NICARAGUA/CIA>JENNINGS: Good evening. The White House tonight is MANUAL>trying to contain a growing controversy having to do with the CIA. It has to do specifically with that manual prepared by someone at the CIA, a how-to manual of guerrilla warfare being used by CIA-supported antigovernment forces in Nicaragua. And it contains advice on political assassinations. President Reagan has asked the agency to investigate improper conduct. We begin with the document itself. Here's ABC's John McWethy.

MCWETHY: The document that is creating such controversy is called 'Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare.' Written in Spanish, it is a primer on how to overthrow a government using tactics ranging from winning hearts and minds of the people to more extreme approaches of blackmail and assassination. Several U.S. officials have confirmed the document was written by the CIA more than a year ago and was distributed to the CIA-backed army called contras, who seek to overthrow the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua. The document talks about how to selectively 'neutralize' public officials who are not cooperating, that such people should be eliminated... in a rapid and effective manner.' It is a violation of U.S. law for any person employed by the government or who is acting in behalf of the U.S. government to have anything to do with assassinations, even if it is just encouraging someone else to do the dirty work. President Reagan signed an executive order to that effect in 1981. In Congress, which is not even in session, the guerrilla handbook has touched off a political firestorm, with both Democrats and Republicans demanding answers.

REP. MICHAEL BARNES (D-Md.): Well, there's no question that this document raises very serious questions about violation of the law of the United States and regulations of the CIA. SEN. EDWARD KENNEDY (D-Mass.): The real question is, what did President Reagan know about this document, when did he know it and what did he do about it?

MCWETHY: Republican Sen. Barry Goldwater called on CIA director William Casey for an immediate explanation. And investigations were being called for by members of the House and Senate. House Speaker Tip O'Neill demanded CIA Director Casey's resignation. REP. THOMAS O'NEILL (D-Mass.): I want him to get out of there. That's what I want him to do. I think it's a disgraceful situation.

MCWETHY: But is the question of assassination by CIA-backed rebels really new? ABC News has learned that

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the U.S. intelligence community was well aware that the contras were conducting assassinations in Nicaragua as long as two years ago. In a Defense Intelligence Agency, or DIA, weekly summary from the summer of 1982, the document runs through a long list of successful contra activities, including, quote, '...the assassination of minor government officials and a Cuban adviser.' There is no indication in this classified intelligence summary who directed the contras to conduct these assassinations, but the CIA was paying their bills and training them. It is not clear if President Reagan ever saw the intelligence summary that detailed the assassinations. But it should have been mandatory reading for the CIA director, for the secretaries of state and defense and for the president's top White House advisers. Intelligence sources say these men should have known and should have told the president. John McWethy, ABC News, Washington. <

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APO2>CAMPAIGN '84/>DONALDSON: This is Sam Donaldson. President Reagan >REAGAN>arrived in New York City for tonight's Al Smith dinner, well aware that a full-scale political flap has developed over the question of the administration's policy toward assassination. Inside the Waldorf, the president was asked if the CIA is out of control. PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN: Not at all.

DONALDSON: Aides say the president learned about the CIA's contra manual from the newspaper. Mr. Reagan today ordered two investigations, one by the CIA inspector general, one by the president's Intelligence Oversight Board. And Deputy Press Secretary Larry Speakes said the administration has 'not advocated or condoned political assassination, nor will we.' Speakes said the appropriate congressional committees will be briefed promptly. Adding to that, a senior official, who declined to be identified, said it appears the manual in question was prepared by a low-level CIA employee who had had previous Vietnam experience. The manual had never been approved by the intelligence community, said the official. But how high its approval had gone, and where the funds came from to print it, were facts yet to be determined, said the official. In Washington, Walter Mondale was quick to offer his own advice to the president. WALTER MONDALE (Democratic presidential candidate): I think what he ought to do is ask himself whether this illegal war in Nicaragua, which has been nothing but an embarrassment from the beginning, has actually strengthened our opposition, embarrassed us before the World Court and given high ground to the Sandinistas they don't deserve, I think he should end that war. That's why the Congress has voted to terminate it.

DONALDSON: This latest flap over Central America couldn't have come at a worse time for the president, just three

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days before his second and final debate with Walter Mondale on foreign policy. It enables Mondale to sharpen the attack on the policy and, more importantly, to raise the question of administration duplicity in attempting to carry it out. Sam Donaldson, ABC News, New York. <

AP03>NICARAGUA/CIA>JENNINGS: Well if the CIA was encouraging political >MANUAL 2>assassination in Nicaragua even indirectly, the agency is obliged by law to tell the congressional intelligence committees. Earlier this week those committees formally asked CIA Director William Casey for a full explanation. Just a short while ago I talked to Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan. He is the vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Why do you think the CIA delayed wanting to give you that decision? Did it have something to do with the debate on Sunday? SEN. DANIEL MOYNIHAN (D-N.Y.): It has to do, Peter... I'm sorry. If this doesn't stop, the White House doesn't get out of this, they're gonna wreck the intelligence community. They have brought it, dragged it into politics, and got it into the worse kind of situations, then disavow it when, basically, an administration policy gets caught.

JENNINGS: What does this phrase 'neutralizing politicians' mean to you on the intelligence committee? MOYNIHAN: The phrase is the selective use of violence for propagandistic purposes. It's got to mean killing people. It's exactly what we said we would never do. I'm sorry. I just hate it, because I just hate to see our intelligence community go back into that tank.

JENNINGS: We have reported earlier in this broadcast this evening that the Defense Intelligence Agency knew in 1982 that there were political assassinations going on in Nicaragua. Did you know that? MOYNIHAN: No. No. and had we known we were... It was the responsibility of the DIA to tell our committee. No such information of any kind has ever come to a Senate committee that I am aware of. And that would be a grievous thing indeed.

JENNINGS: If the Defense Intelligence Agency knows it, who else has got to know about it? MOYNIHAN: The whole government. The Defense Intelligence Agency is the Associated Press, is ABC. They collect information, it spreads through the government, not everywhere, but certainly to the top.

JENNINGS: Do you think, in view of these pieces of information today, that a full investigation of the CIA is warranted again, under its present leadership? MOYNIHAN: It should lead to a complete statement of what they have been involved with in Central America. If they don't do that, if they keep stonewalling, which they have been, only now does the White House blame somebody below.

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They've been saying they can't find out. It will lead to a general inquiry and it will only be to the disadvantage of the intelligence community and to the people in there who need our support and on whom we depend.

JENNINGS: What is the responsibility here of the director of the CIA, Bill Casey? NOYNIHAN: He needs to have been up front with us and, at minimum, when this thing did happen, immediately tell us what we needed to know and not wait for something to dribble out from the White House about 'It must have been a low-level official.' There have, as you know, been calls for his resignation. Would you support them? MOYNIHAN: I think his four years have been sufficient. I'm sorry to have to say that.